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Impacts of 2013 Legislative Session on Public Safety

By Doug Holbrook, DPS Legislative Director

After several years of tough budgets for the Justice and Public Safety agencies, the 2013 session included several major accomplishments for the newly-merged Department of Public Safety. While the department saw some reductions – many from consolidation-generated efficiencies or the Prison Division's cost containment in inmate medical spending - there were four significant expansion items that cap years of work across various portions of DPS.

Full funding to complete VIPER

The legislature provided full funding to complete the Voice Interoperable Plan for Emergency Responders system which allows first responders from multiple agencies to communicate during a crisis. First envisioned in 1994, the communication system has grown slowly for nearly 20 years built largely with federal funds. At the beginning of the year, 80 percent of the towers had been built, but many were still using analog technology. As a result, the system could accommodate only 64,000 users. Meanwhile, more than 3,000 first responders, law enforcement officer and emergency managers were waiting for user IDs to join the system. The General Assembly provided \$25 million to upgrade the technology to a digital standard called P-25 that doubles the available user capacity. At the same time, an additional \$7 million in recurring funds was provided to complete the necessary tower construction to make the system accessible statewide.

With the full build-out of the system, emergency responders at the federal, state and local levels can talk on



NCEM multi-hazard field planner Alex Auten uses a VIPER radio to communicate with a search and rescue team.

It is one of the most significant accomplishments in the public safety arena in years.

On completion of VIPER funding

secure communication channels throughout the state. Completion of VIPER has been a departmental priority for years, and is finally funded fully. It is one of the most significant accomplishments in the public safety arena in years.

Additional Funding and Authority for National Guard Capital Projects

The second landmark accomplishment for the session was a new approach for capital projects in the National Guard, backed up with necessary funding. The North Carolina National Guard operates 93 armories across the state and many are in poor or failing condition. Since the National Guard is federal-state partnership, funding for facility construction and maintenance is shared. But securing the needed federal funds for armory construction traditionally has been difficult because the state and federal fiscal processes run on different schedules. Last year, the department struggled to get much-needed state matching funds for a major armory renovation. That effort highlighted a need for a different approach to capital funding that accounted for the agency's unique position between levels of government.

With Governor McCrory's endorsement, the Guard this year presented to the legislature a new approach to their capital funding needs. The General Assembly took the idea and ran with it, providing \$8.25 million in state matching funds over the biennium to draw down \$21 million in federal funds to address critical renovation needs at 15 sites, while giving the Adjutant General greater authority to manage capital projects so that the state can take full advantage of available federal funds. The new authority and additional funds enables the Guard to implement a long-term strategy that will provide better strategic coverage of the state while recognizing the needs of a 21st century Guard.

Additional Probation and Parole Officers

For public safety, the third major accomplishment of the 2013 legislative session was the creation of 175 new probation and parole officer positions in response to the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2011. The Justice Reinvestment Act was the most comprehensive piece of

criminal sentencing legislation since the Structured Sentencing Act of 1993. Among the many changes wrought by this Act, one of the most important was the requirement that all offenders released from prison must have post-release supervision. The bill also set a statutory caseload goal of 60 offenders per probation officer. Over time, these changes are expected to add nearly 15,000 additional offenders to the annual probation caseload. To ensure adequate supervision, the legislature appropriated funds to create 75 new officer positions this fiscal year and 100 more positions next year. The additional officers will supervise more offenders and ensure the proper implementation of evidence-based practices in supervision.

Funding for Corrections Training Facility

The final major accomplishment of the 2013 legislative session for public safety was securing funding to rehabilitate the old Samarkand Youth Development Center in Moore County as a training facility for corrections and juvenile justice officers. In the Divisions of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, employees are often hired in sworn positions, but cannot begin working with their population for months due to backlogs at the overcrowded training academies. The General Assembly allocated more than \$10 million over the biennium to restore some of the buildings at Samarkand and to configure them for a new training mission. The department anticipates the renovated facility will be operational in 2015.

Nash Hosts DPR 4 Generator Grant Project

By Brent Fisher, Nash County Emergency Services

Nash County Emergency Management hosted the 2011-2012 Homeland Security Grant project from FEMA to purchase generators to support disaster operations. Nash County is one of 11 counties in the Domestic Preparedness Region (DPR) 4. Implemented by North Carolina's State Emergency Response Commission, the DPRs serve as the conduit for local and/or tribal governmental interface and coordination of state and or federal Homeland Security compliance efforts.

The DPRs are designated geographical areas that initiate preparedness activities such as planning, training, exercising and mitigation. They also serve as administrators

*“That capability carries over
to... other counties during
disaster operations.”*

Brent Fisher

Nash County Emergency Services



Members of DPR4 check out one of eight new generators purchased with Homeland Security grants. Pictured (from left): Jacob Petty, Atlantic Power Solutions; Butch Beach and Mark Rogerson, Edgecombe County; Scott Rogers and Brent Fisher, Nash County; Gordon Deno and Rodney Dancy, Wilson County; and Janet Scott, Chatham County.

for vetting potential projects that use federal Homeland Security grants. North Carolina has nine DPRs that encompass all 100 counties and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. Region 4 includes: Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Halifax, Warren, Northampton, Franklin, Durham, Orange, Vance and Granville counties.

Membership of the DPR groups is comprised of representatives from different disciplines within a county such as: public health, Sheriff's Office, police, fire, rescue, hospitals, public works, emergency management and emergency medical services. Members organize into discipline-focused subcommittees to enable stakeholders to fully participate in regional planning activities. Their role is to compile information on potential solution-based projects that best fit the needs of the region.

In previous projects, the group identified a need for transfer switches at vital facilities or shelters, as well as generators to provide power to these facilities. Eight of the 11 DPR4 counties are designated as potential host counties for residents and visitors

evacuating from the coast. These counties would be asked to open shelters to host any evacuee that required sheltering. The transfer switch and generator would be used to support power losses at these shelters.

Nash County Emergency Management agreed to host two grants and the commissioners agreed to provide the initial funds to purchase the eight generators. The total grant award for both parts of the project was \$387,393. Nash County, along with Orange, Warren, Franklin, Halifax, Northampton, Edgecombe and Wilson, received the Baldor 150 kw diesel-powered generators on January 22. The new generators and transfer switches allow better interoperability of hookup at the designated sites identified in the respected counties.

"We are enhancing our capabilities at the regional levels to be better prepared when disasters strike," said Brent Fisher, deputy emergency management coordinator for Nash County. "That capability carries over to other regions and eventually to the state to support other counties during disaster operations."

Tornado App Available for Mobile Devices

By Lee Stocks, American Red Cross

A new American Red Cross Tornado App puts help right into the hands of people who live in or visit tornado-prone areas. It's free and available in English or Spanish for iPhone, iPad and Android users.

Launched last spring, the Red Cross app gives people instant access to local and real-time information such as NOAA tornado watch and warning alerts. It also tells people what to do before, during and after tornadoes. Other features of the app include:

- A high-pitched siren and “tornado warning” alert that indicates when a NOAA tornado warning is in effect;
- An “all clear” alert that indicates when a tornado warning has expired;
- An “I’m safe” button for sending messages to loved ones indicating you are okay;
- Simple steps and checklists for creating an emergency plan and sharing it with others;
- Enhanced weather maps and information provided by Weather Underground, a digital brand of The Weather Company;
- Preloaded preparedness content that gives instant access to critical action steps even without mobile connectivity;
- Toolkit with a flashlight, a strobe light and an audible alarm;
- Locations of open Red Cross shelters; and
- Badges users can earn through interactive quizzes and share on social networks.

People across the country can now receive location-based NOAA tornado, severe thunderstorm and flood alerts on their mobile devices and share them on their social networks. Users can share vital information via Facebook, Twitter, text and email.

The American Red Cross also has apps available for First Aid, Hurricane, Earthquake and Wild Fire. They can be found in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store by searching for American Red Cross or by going to redcross.org/mobileapps.



Mark your Calendar

Aug.12-14 NC HART Training

Aug.12 NC Boundary Commission,
Raleigh

Sept. NC-SC Boundary
Commission, *York, SC*

Oct. NCEMA Conference,
Wilmington

Sprayberry Sworn in as NCEM Director

Michael Sprayberry was sworn in as the director of North Carolina Emergency Management July 18. He was appointed as the division's director in February.

Sprayberry was appointed as NCEM deputy director for in 2005. As such, he oversaw the division's budget, as well as the emergency and human services, communications and field staff that work closely with local communities on disaster prevention and response.

Prior to joining NCEM, Sprayberry served in the North Carolina Army National Guard for 25 years and served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College and has both bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Sprayberry was sworn in as director of NCEM during the division's all hands meeting



Volunteers Are Critical in Recovery

By Charles Tripp, N.C. Emergency Management

Last August many Roanoke Rapids residents got out of bed only to realize they were standing in inches, if not feet, of water. Flash flood waters from nearly a foot of rain in less than one hour, flooded many homes, trapped others inside and destroyed the homes of others. On Carolina Avenue, two of the destroyed homes were demolished. The replacement for one is under construction just behind and uphill from the shell of the owner's home. The home that is being built will belong to Ruben Wayne Lewis.

In collaboration with N.C. Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (NCVOAD), N.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church (NCCUMC) Disaster Recovery Ministry, Skills USA – North Carolina, Lowes Home Improvement, N.C. Emergency Management, and a myriad of volunteers, Mr. Lewis has a new home in his future. NCVOAD, through NCCUMC Disaster Recovery, coordinates the volunteer groups coming to assist in the demolition and construction. Skills USA – NC provided labor building and erecting the framing for the walls as part of their state competition. High school teams from Mooresville and Robeson County came to Roanoke Rapids to raise the walls. The Mooresville team won the state championship.



Volunteers help build a new home that was destroyed by flooding last summer.



Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012

The Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 was signed into law July 6, 2012. In addition to reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program through September 2017, the bill prompts several substantive changes including the way premium rates are calculated. In addition to raising the limit on the annual premium increases to 20 percent (from 10 percent), it includes two major changes that result in the discounted insurance rates being discontinued for all properties except Pre-Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) primary residences that have not lost their qualification for the rate.

CHANGE 1: Pre-FIRM rates will be discontinued for all business properties and other buildings that are not a primary residence. To be considered a primary residence, the insured must live in the home at least 80 percent of the year. Pre-FIRM refers to buildings built before 1975 or before the community received its first Flood Insurance Rate Map. Pre-FIRM rates for currently insured properties expire with termination of an existing policy and are not available for a new policy on the property.

Currently insured properties that no longer qualify for Pre-FIRM rates will see their premiums increase 25% per year until actuarial rates are achieved.

CHANGE 2: Grandfathered rates will be discontinued. A grandfather rate was applied to buildings built in compliance with the FIRM at the time of construction, but a more recent FIRM shows the building to be at a greater risk. These buildings have been

grandfathered administratively, and were allowed to keep the rate-class (flood zone and building elevation relative to base floor elevation) that applied at the time of construction. The premiums will now increase toward actuarial rates phased in over a five-year period with 20 percent of the increase added each year. The five-year period begins on the effective date of the FIRM that identifies the increased risk. For example, if the actuarial rate is \$1000 per year more

than the subsidized rate, the premium would increase \$200 per year for five years.

Rate changes under the first clause are expected to take place October 1, 2013. Changes under the second clause are expected to be effective October 2014.

Who is impacted?

- Only 19% of NFIP policy holders MAY see rate changes
 - 5% of all NFIP policies will see immediate 25% increases.
 - 10% of all policies which are subsidized primary residences will keep their subsidy. (Exceptions include: if they sell their property, allow policy to lapse, purchase a new policy.)
 - 4% includes subsidized condos and non-condo multi-family structures
- 81% of current NFIP policy holders are rated properly and **WILL NOT** see rate changes.

Hurricanes in Hyde County (below) - In May, officials from Hyde County, the NC Ferry Division and NCEM held a three-day tabletop exercise on the challenges Ocracoke Island may face during a hurricane. Participants discussed the evacuation process, maintaining infrastructure and logistical constraints of getting resources to the island. The exercise helped to clarify roles and responsibilities of each agency during a disaster that impacts the island.



4th Annual ECU Hurricane Workshop

By Charles Tripp, N.C. Emergency Management

Emergency managers, meteorologists and academics gathered at East Carolina University in May to discuss the latest in hurricane and flood prediction and response. The one-day conference was held through a collaborative partnership with North Carolina Emergency Management, East Carolina University Center for Natural Hazards Research and RENCI.

Panel discussions provided the response and management community with new concepts and information that may assist them in weather-related events. U.S. Coast Guard Commander Linda Sturgis, Prevention Department Head for New York, discussed Hurricane Sandy's impact on a major metro region, damage to critical infrastructure, and the disruption of one of the nation's most vital port areas. Sturgis also reviewed the initial response command control, marine transportation recovery, pollution response and long term restoration.

2013 Hurricane Names

Andrea

Barry

Chantal

Dorian

Erin

Fernand

Gabrielle

Humberto

Ingrid

Jerry

Karen

Lorenzo

Melissa

Nestor

Olga

Pablo

Rebekah

Sebastien

Tanya

Van

Wendy

NRC Revises Requirements for Boiling Water Reactors

From NRC Staff Reports

In response to the Fukushima event in 2011, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued orders that focused on the assurance of reliable hardened vents for Boiling Water Reactors with Mark I and II containments.

In March 2013, the NRC directed staff at nuclear reactors to embark on an additional two-step approach for additional improvements to safety systems at all U.S. boiling water reactors with Mark I or Mark II containments which include: Hatch, Brunswick and Browns Ferry nuclear plants (similar to those in Fukushima).

The first step requires the enhancement of the March 2012 Order requiring “hardened” venting systems at the 31 boiling-water reactors in the United States such that the vents will remain functional during severe accident conditions. The Orders mandated that U.S. boiling water reactors with Mark I or Mark II containments either install vents or improve their existing venting system. The enhancements required by the Commission are indented to ensure that vents can handle the elevated pressures, temperatures and radiation levels from a damaged reactor, and that plant staff are able to operate the vents under these conditions.

The second step requires nuclear reactor staff begin a public rulemaking process to consider additional requirements for reactors with these containments to retain and/or filter radioactive material during an accident and enhance the capability to maintain containment integrity and cool core debris.

More information:

<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/commission/recent/2013>

Social Media in Disasters

By Kyle Van Dusen, NC Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service

Every year disasters cause death, destruction and damage in the United States.

Increasingly, people are using social media to communicate with friends and families even in emergencies. Close to 50% of Americans use Facebook and Twitter, one in five have used an emergency application, and 76% of disaster affected persons have used social media to contact friends and family. The increased use of social media gives emergency managers the ability to communicate directly with survivors and potential volunteers.

Examples of social media use in recent disasters:

- After the deadly tornado tore through Joplin, Missouri a local hospital employee used Facebook to successfully locate 1,100 missing hospital employees
- Following the tornadoes in Tuscaloosa, Al., a school system in posted the need for volunteers to help with cleanup. Eighty volunteers arrived in less than 30 minutes.
- During Hurricane Sandy, 23 Red Cross staffers monitored 2.5 million Sandy-related social media postings.
- Texting “90999” enabled users to send a \$10 donation to Red Cross after the deadly 2010 Haiti earthquake. Three million dollars were raised in the first 48 hours.
- FEMA tweeted to followers during Hurricane Sandy: “Phone lines may be congested/during after #sandy. Let love ones know you are OK by sending a text or updating your social networks.”

From locating survivors, soliciting volunteers, raising money, conveying updates to the public, communicating with the media, collaborating and sharing information with state and federal partners, streaming live video, engaging in rumor control, to responding to inquiries, social media is becoming a valuable yet possibly underutilized tool in responding to disasters.

FEMA has developed a free online course can help emergency managers harness the potential of social media. IS-42: Social Media in Emergency Management provides participants with best practices—including tools, techniques, and a basic roadmap—to build social media capabilities in emergency management organizations. Visit: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/courseOverview.aspx?code=IS-42>

“Social media is imperative to emergency management because the public uses these communication tools regularly... we must use social media tools to more fully engage the public as a critical partner in our efforts.”

*Chris Fugate
FEMA Administrator*



Farewell to Rudisill

Members of North Carolina's Emergency Management community bade farewell to Gerald "Rudy" Rudisill in March at an informal retirement celebration.

Scores of people from NCEM, the National Guard and NCDPS attended the informal

gathering and shared their favorite Rudy stories as tribute to the long-serving state servant. Rudisill served as Adjutant General of the North Carolina National Guard from 1993 – 2001, and then returned to the former Department of Crime Control and Public Safety as chief deputy secretary from 2003 until his retirement March 31.

Rudisill told the group he appreciated their "can-do spirit and hard work ethic," and how the emergency management community always pulls together. He thanked the group for their dedication saying, "y'all have given much more to me than I have to you."

The now thrice-retired public servant plans to rejoin his family in Charlotte full time after commuting to Raleigh for more than a decade.

Rudisill says he does plan to devote more time to recreational activities and hobbies, but that he will still remain engaged and active in the emergency management.

Staffing Changes

Joining the Community

Zach Carpino – became NCEM's Technological Hazards Branch manager Aug. 5. Zach served in the U.S. Army and began supporting NCEM as a grants manager last spring.

Jeffrey Childs - joined NCEM in April as a communications officer in the 24 hour center coming from a background in Virginia's emergency management and 911 telecommunications.

Felicia Daniels – joined NCEM's hazard mitigation section in March.

Mike Feger – became the NCEM Statewide Interoperable Communications Planner Aug. 9. He joined NCEM last January.

Cherelle James – was promoted to NCEM's Human Services Manager in April. She joined the division in 2012.

Sherry Janarelli – was hired as a NCEM exercise officer in June, coming from the Connecticut National Guard.

Brian Parnell – joined NCEM as the Area 1 Coordinator in May. He previously served as the Northampton County EM Director.

Steve Powers – was promoted to NCEM Central Branch Manager Aug. 9. He joined NCEM in 2000 and has worked in grants management, recovery and field operations.

Tim Reavis – was hired as a homeland security grants manager for NCEM Aug. 5. Tim joined NCEM last year as an intern supporting EMAP re-accreditation and the planning branch.

Nelson Santiago - was hired as an exercise officer for NCEM in April. He came to the division from the US Coast Guard.

Chris Tant – was promoted to NCEM Communications Manager August 7. Chris

joined NCEM as communications officer in 2003 and serves as a volunteer fire fighter.

Katie Webster – became the NCEM natural hazards planner in early July and serves as part of the division's meteorological team. She comes from the National Weather Service Sterling, Va. Field Support Center.

Zak Whicker – joined NCEM in April as a communications officer in the 24 hour center coming from a background as a 911 tele-communicator.

Joe Wright – was promoted to NCEM Deputy Director in April. Joe joined the division in 19xx as an area coordinator, then became Central Branch Manager in 2007.

Saying Goodbye

Clay Benton – retired in May after 18 years leading NCEM's communication center. Benton wrote the division's communications plan and also supervised the installation of the division's secure room, VIPER communications terminal and new 24-hour center.

Rick Carraway – retired from NCEM's Geodetic Survey group in July after 39 years of state service. Rick was a nationally recognized expert in tidal datums, submerged lands and coastal property issues

Andrew Langan – left NCEM in July after 2.5 years as a homeland security planner.

Steve Payne – retired in June after 15 years as the leading radiological emergency preparedness planner for NCEM.

Carol Smith – accepted a job out of state, leaving NCEM after 5.5 years as part of the Public Assistance section.

Ryan Wiedenman – left NCEM Hazard Mitigation section in July to join Atkins Global.